



# USAID | HAITI

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## PROGRAM TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT ELECTORAL COUNCIL IN HAITI

On March 2, 2007, USAID formally awarded the Organization of American States (OAS) the sum of \$1,240,600 to fund an innovative program to Promote Human Rights and Support the Establishment of the Permanent Electoral Council in Haiti.

The purpose of the grant is to strengthen democracy in Haiti through a one-year program that will support human rights and facilitate the modernization and strengthening of the Electoral Council. The grant is particularly significant because it will build on the progress made through Haiti's transition and subsequent return to constitutional governance. Most importantly, this initiative will serve Haitians by increasing their personal security and engendering greater confidence in their representative government.

### Human Rights

The program will raise awareness on human rights issues and coordinate efforts between human rights organizations, local agencies and the Government of Haiti to afford Haitian citizens greater human rights protection through the creation of new laws. The OAS activity will provide small grants for the capacity-building of local organizations and offer trainings and conferences on human rights issues. Technical assistance and informational material will also be given to appropriate government institutions to strengthen their protective capacity.

Funding will additionally support training and instruction on human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the American Convention of Human Rights, which will guide Haiti in protecting human rights according to international standards. The project will utilize such instruments to assist vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. Correspondingly, the project will support the advocacy for national legislation that upholds and preserves human rights for all citizens.

### Electoral Council

The USAID - OAS partnership will assist in the establishment of Haiti's first permanent Electoral Council. Following the recently concluded local elections, indirect elections will be conducted to complete membership of the Electoral Council. The project will help consolidate this important democratic institution by professionalizing processes in a way that will allow Haiti to conduct future elections with minimal outside assistance.

This initiative will provide the Electoral Council with the necessary technological capacity to ensure public awareness and participation in elections. To do so, efforts will focus on the transfer of information technology systems adopted by the provisional Electoral Council over to the now-permanent Electoral Council. The upgraded information system will facilitate registration and information management systems for voter, political party and candidate registration. Technical assistance and training on the use and maintenance of the computer systems will provide the staff with sustainable skills. Correspondingly, the project will improve and empower the institutional

structure of the Electoral Council by establishing advanced legal frameworks and operating systems.

This program supports the ongoing efforts of the Haitian Government and the donor community to further Haiti's progress in achieving greater stability through good governance and to enhance justice and democracy for all Haitian people, particularly its most vulnerable populations.

The United States remains Haiti's largest bilateral donor, contributing more than \$600 million in assistance to Haiti from 2004 – 2006.

For more information please see the fact sheet on U.S. assistance to Haiti at:

<http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/fs/2006/77358.htm>